

4 *What were the results of the mediations?*

In 2001/2002 school year

- Number of cases resolved or partially resolved
72 of 88 cases/ 82% resolution rate

In 2000/2001 school year

- Number of cases resolved or partially resolved
67 of 83 cases/ 75% resolution rate

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S S E M S

Statewide Special Education Mediation System



2002 UPDATE Virginia Department of Education



Congress mandated in the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) Amendments of 1997 that all state educational agencies establish and implement procedures to allow disputants to mediate special education conflicts. In response to the 1997 mandate, the Virginia Department of Education hosted a meeting of stakeholders to identify the key issues, questions, and comments relative to developing a mediation system. Subsequently, a design team was established at the department to develop the Statewide Special Education Mediation System (SSEMS). The proposed design for SSEMS was shared with stakeholder groups in 1998, and refinements were made based on their feedback.

After selecting and training eight mediators, SSEMS became operational in September 1999. Several key features of the finalized design of SSEMS included the following: (1) Participation in mediation is voluntary on the part of both parties; (2) Any issue regarding a child's eligibility for special education services or their provision, scope, or delivery may be mediated at anytime; and, (3) Attorneys and advocates may act only as an advisor and not formally represent the party during the mediation session.

Within days after the announcement of the availability of mediation services, parents and educators began requesting SSEMS to assist in the settlement of their special education disputes and by the end of the 1999/2000 school year, 49 services requests had been made with all but four of them resulting in completed mediations. Since the early days of service provision, the use of SSEMS has grown steadily. The following information is provided about mediations during the last two years of SSEMS operations. This information focuses on four questions:

1 How many services requests were received and processed?

In 2001/2002 school year

• Number of mediation requests	104
• Number of cases closed prior to mediation	16
• Number of mediation cases	88

In 2000/2001 school year

• Number of mediation requests	95
• Number of cases closed prior to mediation	12
• Number of mediation cases	83

3 What were the most common issues raised in the mediations?

In 2001/2002 school year

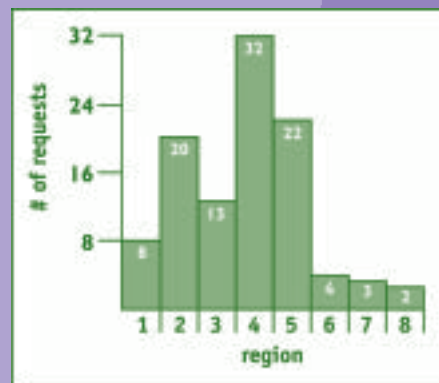
- Sufficiency of services
Identified in 62 of 88 cases
- Type of services
Identified in 36 of 88 cases
- Setting of services
Identified in 28 of 88 cases
- Assessment and classification
Identified in 23 of 88 cases

In 2000/2001 school year

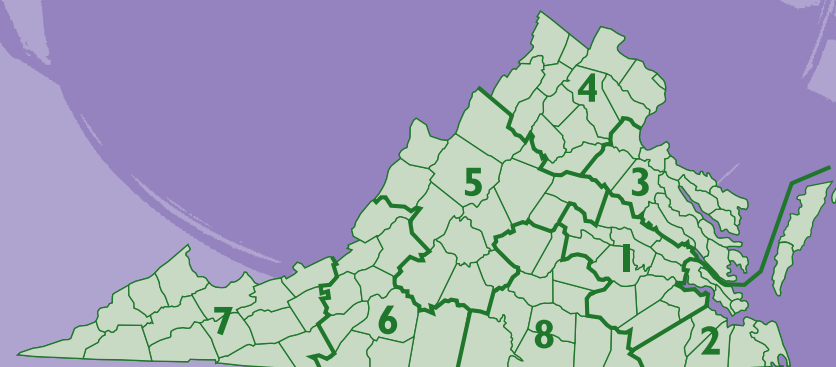
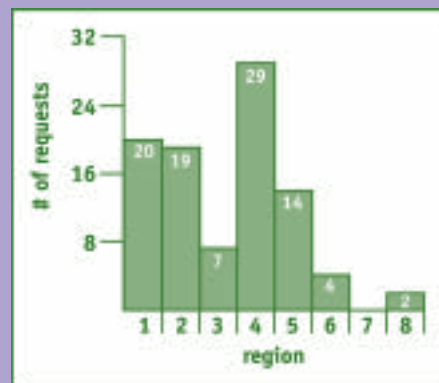
- Sufficiency of services
Identified in 50 of 83 cases
- Type of services
Identified in 45 of 83 cases
- Setting of services
Identified in 31 of 83 cases
- Assessment and classification
Identified in 23 of 83 cases

2 What was the distribution of the requests by regions?

In 2001/2002 school year



In 2000/2001 school year



Regions 1 - 8